



**AGENCY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

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**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “FROM A NUCLEAR TEST BAN TO A  
NUCLEAR-WEAPONS-FREE WORLD”**

**Panel session 2**

**“Security without nuclear weapons – Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones”**

**Remarks by Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda**

**OPANAL Secretary General**

Astana, 29 August 2012

*H.E. Nurlan Nigmatulin*, Chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan,  
Members of the Panel, distinguished delegates,

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan for having extended me the invitation to participate in this International Conference and in the commemorative events on the occasion of the “XXI Anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk Test Site.” I have no words to describe the emotion that the people of Semey made me experience yesterday during the celebration. Visiting the site that was the target of numerous nuclear tests for decades gave me mixed feelings of sorrow and hope. Sorrow over the irreparable damage caused to human life; and hope, because I have witnessed what a nation is able to achieve when overcoming adversity. You set an example to the world.

Your Excellency Nurlan Nigmatulin, I would also like to express the importance of being here today, in Astana, the territory of the Central Asian NWFZ, sharing the Vision of a World without Nuclear Weapons, and identifying actions that enable us to move forward towards this global goal. This is a good preamble to the challenges that await us in the near future, including the 2015 Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones to be held in Indonesia.

45 years have passed since the States of Latin America and the Caribbean signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco. More than 20 years have passed since Nuclear-Weapon States (P5) ratified Additional Protocols I and II to this Treaty, and undertook to respect and to guarantee the denuclearized status of the zone. Today, our major challenges are imprinted in two inseparable lines, to continue to strengthen the NWFZ, and to join forces to achieve its ultimate reason for existence: a world without nuclear weapons.

The five existing NWFZs and Mongolia represent 115 sovereign States that decided to declare their territories free of the nuclear threat, thus contributing to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, and to global peace and security. Above all, these States share the aspiration of a world without nuclear weapons, a safer world where the practice of international politics is inspired by the highest values: peace, security, justice, mutual respect, and a peaceful solution to conflicts, based on International Law.

The two NWFZ Conferences held in Mexico City (2005) and in New York City (2010) have marked the beginning of a relationship between these Zones. The Final Documents adopted at both Conferences contain the objectives and essential ideas for cooperation and coordination between NWFZs. It is now time to move forward towards identifying a common agenda and effective coordination mechanisms. It is a necessary task, but definitely not an easy one considering the diversity of States and regions, the heterogeneity of the institutional framework of each NWFZ, and their national priorities. However, the mission is facilitated by the Zones’

common purposes and their wealth of experience gained over the years. As an example, it would be enough to mention that each NWFZ emerged in a very specific context, responding to the need for peace and security in their territory, starting from blocking nuclear weapons until reaching the prohibition of nuclear tests. They all seek to receive negative security assurances, and yet at the same time believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only possible guarantee against their multiple threats.

The current international context offers opportunities to move forward towards achieving this goal (the common agenda and the coordination mechanisms); at the same time, it imposes certain obligations. Sharing good practices and lessons learnt in each NWFZ would be a good starting point. It would systematize the evolution of the NWFZ concept and practice in order to share it with new processes seeking to establish similar zones. Another major working area includes joining forces to agree on a universal and legally-binding instrument aimed at banning nuclear weapons. Progress has been made towards this end by the 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean. In September 2011, they adopted a Joint Declaration; they agreed to “support the exhortation made by the United Nations Secretary General in his five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament to all NPT parties, in particular the nuclear-weapon-states, to fulfil their obligation under the treaty to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament.” They also expressed their “conviction of the importance of initiating negotiations for a universal, legally binding instrument aimed at prohibiting nuclear weapons”, and they committed themselves to “joining forces in favour of this main objective.”

International forums such as this one are an occasion for dialogue on these matters, and an opportunity for reflection on other priority subjects of common interest, such as Nuclear Security and the total ban on nuclear testing. They are a gateway to steady progress in the construction of a world without weapons, weapons that have the power to destroy humanity. They are an opportunity to continue to build a shared leadership between the five existing NWFZs, and so is the fact that the III NWFZ Conference will be held in a State outside of the Americas.

Finally, I would like to thank the Government of Kazakhstan for sending a delegation to Mexico City in February this year, to take part in the Commemorative event on the occasion of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the International Seminar “The experience of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and the perspective towards 2015 and beyond”. Our distances are shorter insofar as we join our dreams together, insofar as we pursue mutual understanding and common goals. The approach of our NWFZs has started to make gradual but substantive progress. I reiterate my best wishes and commitment to continue to consolidate this approach.

I wish the Government and the people of Kazakhstan the best of health.

Rahmet, spasibo

(Thank you)